



LAGNIAPPE

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February 2006

New Stennis Space Center director announced

NASA announced senior management changes at Stennis Space Center on Jan. 23.

William Parsons, director of Stennis Space Center, has accepted the position of deputy center director at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla. Parsons became Stennis director in September 2005.

Richard Gilbrech will take over as Stennis Space Center director. He has served as deputy director of the agency's Langley Research Center, Hampton, Va., and deputy director of NASA's Engineering Safety Center. He started his career at Stennis in 1991 and later served as the director of the center's Program Integration Office. He has worked at the agency's Johnson Space Flight Center's White Sands Facility, N.M.; Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala.; and Glenn Research Center, Cleveland.

He earned a bachelor's in aerospace engineering from Mississippi State University, Starkville; and master's and doctoral degrees from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena.

"I have had a great experience at Langley," Gilbrech said, "both in the NASA Engineering and Safety Center and as deputy center director and will miss the fine folks there. I am excited about this new opportunity and look forward to returning to the place where my NASA career began."

Parsons joined NASA in 1990 after leaving the Marine



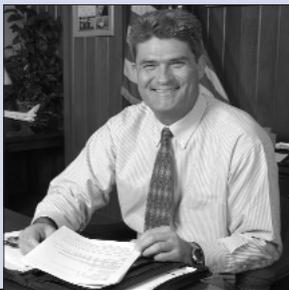
Bill Parsons (left), former director of NASA's Stennis Space Center, receives a parting gift from Miguel Rodriguez (right), director of Stennis Space Center's Propulsion Test Directorate, during a farewell-and-welcome reception Wednesday, Feb. 8. Parsons' successor, Richard Gilbrech (center), returns to Stennis Space Center after serving as deputy center director of NASA's Langley Research Center, Va. He began his career with NASA at Stennis Space Center in 1991. Parsons has accepted the position of deputy center director at Kennedy Space Center, Fla. He became Stennis director in September 2005, leading NASA's recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

Corps. He has served in several senior leadership positions within the human space flight program. After the Columbia tragedy, Parsons was selected to direct NASA's return to flight efforts as space shuttle program manager, and he directed last summer's successful flight of Discovery during STS-114. He led NASA's recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

"Although it is with a heavy heart I leave Stennis Space Center and Mississippi," Parsons said, "the opportunity to be able to serve this agency at the Kennedy Space Center and to bring my family together provides an opportunity to satisfy both professional and personal goals. I leave knowing Stennis is in great hands under Rick's leadership."

From the desk of
Bill Parsons

Outgoing Director,
 Stennis Space Center



It is with mixed emotions that I write my final column for Lagniappe as center director of NASA's Stennis Space Center. As you are probably aware, I have accepted the position of deputy center director at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

When I was offered the opportunity in August 2005 to return as director of Stennis Space Center, I was looking forward to coming home and working with the tremendously talented and dedicated team of individuals here. I had just served two-and-a-half years as the space shuttle program manager, leading the return-to-flight activities for the agency and the Discovery STS-114 mission. This was a demanding position which required critical decisions. Returning to the Gulf Coast promised to be a refreshing change.

However, I hadn't even made it to the center before Hurricane Katrina struck with a devastating impact. I was named NASA's senior official in charge of the recovery efforts at both Stennis Space Center and the

Michoud Assembly Facility. But the decision-making was easier than those as shuttle program manager because it was about people and doing the right thing for people.

Now, I've been offered the opportunity to serve the agency at the Kennedy Space Center. My family lives on the Space Coast and the move allows me to bring my family back together and provides a chance to satisfy both professional and personal goals. Still, it is with a heavy heart that I once again leave Stennis Space Center and Mississippi.

In last month's column, I thanked you for welcoming me back to Stennis and supporting me as we worked numerous challenges. Now, I want to take this opportunity to welcome back another member of the Stennis family, Rick Gilbrech, who returns after having served as deputy director of the Langley Research Center. I leave knowing Stennis is in great hands under Rick's leadership and urge you to provide him the same level of support you have shown me.

Stennis is an extraordinary center and I sincerely hope you invite me back regularly. Godspeed, as we look forward to the challenges ahead.

The Lagniappe: A little something extra

As the Lagniappe staff began working on reviving the newsletter, a question was asked about the history of Lagniappe. Well, it may come as a surprise that the newsletter will mark its 30th anniversary next year. On Nov. 21, 1977, the original Lagniappe staff, Leroy Gilbert, manager of institutional operations; Mack Herring, NASA public affairs officer; Elva Smith, information services; and Charlie Swan, graphic illustrator; published the first sitewide newsletter for employees at National Space Technology Laboratories (renamed John C. Stennis Space Center by Executive order of President Ronald Reagan on May 20, 1988).

The Lagniappe quickly became a popular newsletter with employees throughout NASA, providing them

with news and information about NSTL.

Still, many have asked why the newsletter carries such an odd name. A little history of the word and how it is pronounced may help in understanding how the name came about. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "lagniappe" as an American French word from the American Spanish *la ñapa*, meaning something given or obtained gratuitously or by way of good measure. Many people along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and south Louisiana commonly use the word. So, Ed Ling, chief counsel of NSTL, came up with the name because that's what the paper was to be: "a little something extra for employees."

Lagniappe also came with another popular, yet odd feature, the Gator cartoon. Gator has a rich history at Stennis Space Center, going back to the very beginning when the Mississippi Test Facility (renamed NSTL on June 14, 1974) began to rise out of the swamps. With problems such as rain and mosquitoes plaguing the workers, a strong mascot and motivational symbol was needed. Both the armadillo and the alligator were discussed, but because the alligator was strong and powerful, the first Gator cartoons were drawn by Charlie Swan.

Mack Herring later joined the History Office at Stennis, and penned a popular commentary column for Lagniappe. Look for more information on this feature next month.

Instrumentation Test Apparatus fills critical need

The NASA/contractor team in Stennis Space Center's E Test Complex is activating a system that will test instrumentations designed to withstand the extreme conditions of high-pressure tanks that hold super-cold (cryogenic) fluids.

Stennis Space Center, as well as other rocket test sites, uses high-pressure cryogenic tanks up to 10,000 psi (pounds per square inch) to rapidly discharge fluids into test articles during rocket engine component testing.

Historically, development of test instrumentation to accurately measure tank dynamics in such challenging environments has been slowed by the absence of a test device that simulates such environments.

The Instrumentation Test Apparatus now being activated at the E-2 Test Stand is a container designed to simulate high-pressure tank conditions and test the behavior, accuracy and reliability of probes, sensors and other instrumentation. The ITA is com-

posed of a 13-foot-long, 12-inch outside diameter and 9-inch inside diameter pipe capable of being normally pressurized to 6,500 psi while holding up to 40 gallons of liquid nitrogen or liquid oxygen.

The first use of the ITA will support the development of a high-pressure capacitance level probe produced at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. Accurate accounting of the level of cryogenic fluids under high pressures has been difficult due to the extreme conditions the probe must endure.

Development of the ITA is the result of a multifaceted collaboration over a two-year period.

Conceived in discussions between a propulsion test engineer and a technology applications engineer at Stennis Space Center, the initial development of the ITA was encouraged and funded by the Technology Development and Transfer



The Instrumentation Test Apparatus simulates conditions in high-pressure tanks for testing probes, sensors and other instrumentation.

Office at Stennis. Further development resulted from a collaborative agreement between the technology transfer office, the Rocket Propulsion Test Program and the Propulsion Test Directorate at Stennis.

Budget reflects NASA's exploration vision

On Monday, Feb. 6, President Bush announced his Fiscal Year 2007 budget request which included \$16.8 billion for NASA. This is a 3.2 percent increase over the 2006 budget, not including the Hurricane Katrina relief funds.

Following the announcement, NASA Administrator Mike Griffin released a statement regarding the FY 2007 budget request. It stated, "This budget, with an increase over last year's appropriation, demonstrates the President's commitment to carrying out the Vision for Space Exploration ... and especially so in view of the other pressures on the government in the wake of the greatest natural disaster our nation has faced and the war on terrorism."

Griffin also said, "It balances NASA's mission to complete the assembly of the International Space Station and fulfill our international partner commitments, while using the minimum number of shuttle flights to do so. It supports our goal of bringing the Crew Exploration Vehicle online

no later than 2014, and potentially much sooner. It provides over \$5.3 billion in funding for NASA's science missions and over \$724 million for aeronautics research. The FY07 budget also provides almost \$500 million for cross-agency support programs, such as science and math education, innovative partnerships for NASA to leverage commercial industry, and development of the unified agencywide management systems to get NASA's finances in better order."

Griffin addressed NASA's workforce saying, "Beyond the purely budgetary perspective, I would now like to discuss NASA's most important resource: our people. The NASA management team has been working on the issues and means to rebuild NASA so as to have 10 healthy centers known for technical greatness."

For the full statement, along with additional information on the FY2007 budget request, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov>.

SSC employees receive Silver Snoopy awards



Astronaut Jim Reilly, Ronnie Rigney and Astronaut Doug Hurley

Six employees at NASA's Stennis Space Center were honored Tuesday, Jan. 31, with a "Silver Snoopy," the personal achievement award given to space program workers by NASA's astronaut corps.

With their families in attendance, each recipient received from astronauts Jim Reilly and Doug Hurley a Silver Snoopy pin flown on space shuttle mission STS-105. Each honoree also received a letter of commendation and certificate, both signed and presented by the astronauts.

The recipients:

■ **Ronnie Rigney** of Poplarville, Miss., is the space shuttle main engine project manager for NASA's Propulsion Test Directorate at Stennis Space Center and is responsible for managing all aspects of testing the space shuttle main engines on the A-1 and A-2 test stands.

■ **Lynn Heberling** of Pearl River, La., is a management support assistant for NASA's Program Development Directorate and performs administrative duties. She received the award for her work as a management support assistant in the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.



Astronaut Doug Hurley, Lynn Heberling and Astronaut Jim Reilly

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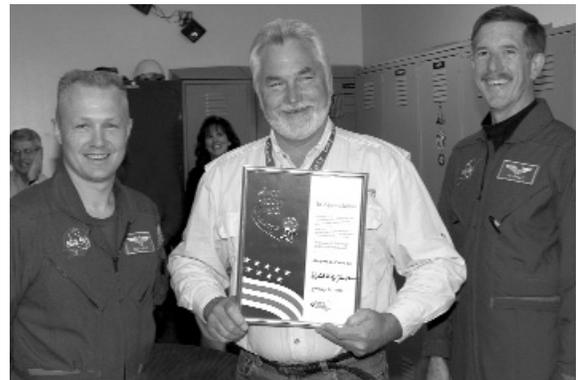
Astronaut Jim Reilly, Kirk Foster and Astronaut Doug Hurley



Astronaut Jim Reilly, James Biles and Astronaut Doug Hurley



Astronaut Doug Hurley, Robert Ryan and Astronaut Jim Reilly



Astronaut Doug Hurley, Greg Conn and Astronaut Jim Reilly

Archaeology takes NASA technology underground



Archaeologist Dr. Marco Giardino catalogs artifacts from the former town of Gainesville that are now part of a new display at StenniSphere, the visitor center at NASA's Stennis Space Center. The artifacts were found using high-tech remote sensing methods like ground-penetrating radar, magnetometers, and satellite and airborne images.

A marriage of space-age technology and traditional archaeology has unearthed a wealth of objects at NASA's Stennis Space Center. A collection of artifacts, remnants of everyday life in Gainesville, Miss., were found using high-tech remote sensing methods like ground-penetrating radar, magnetometers, and satellite and airborne images.

The objects were uncovered during archaeological excavations conducted over the past 11 years at the site of the 19th century Hancock County seat on the Pearl River, now part of SSC. The artifacts are now highlighted in a new exhibit at SSC's visitor center, StenniSphere.

"We chose the Gainesville site to pioneer and pilot new remote sensing methods and equipment," said archaeologist Dr. Marco Giardino of NASA's New Business Development Office at SSC. "Features identified by one set of instruments were confirmed by each of the others. So our verification and validation process yielded some great archeological finds."

Those finds include a clay pipe stem, a brass button, a lock from the original Hancock County courthouse, pottery fragments, trade beads, 6,000-year-old arrowheads and hundreds of other items. Some yield more information than others. The tiny pipe stem, for example, was important because it led to research confirming the presence of British settlers much earlier than anyone thought (see column at right).

Editor's Note: Archeologist Dr. Marco Giardino, of NASA's New Business Development Office at SSC, will contribute a monthly column to the Lagniappe, dedicated to the rich history of the area surrounding the center.

During an archaeological survey conducted by NASA in 1995, a fragment of a British ceramic pipe was discovered near the location of what used to be the Hancock County courthouse. This was a puzzling find since it was widely reputed at that time, that Ambrose Gaines had been the first and most prominent citizen of Gainesville, arriving during the early 19th century.

Spurred by the find, NASA scientists researched the British area deeds (1763-1782) and discovered that a land grant was made Dec. 12, 1776, to the British military surveyor, George Gauld. His 2,000-acre grant, located on the east bank of the East Pearl River, included the future site of the town of Gainesville.

Britain obtained the region after the Treaty of Paris in 1763 which ended the French-Indian War (1756-1763). Exploration and mapping of the Mississippi and Breton Sounds became a British military priority.

George Gauld, the surveyor for the British government in West Florida (1764-1781), began mapping the northern Gulf Coast in 1768. Gauld eventually surveyed, sounded and charted Lake Borgne, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, the Rigolets, Chef Menteur, Pass Manchac and the Pearl River, among other localities. His cartographic efforts resulted in the most accurate and comprehensive products of the 18th century.

One possible explanation for Gauld's excellence in surveying and mapping may be traced to his initial cross-Atlantic voyage to North America. Gauld made the crossing on *The Tartar*, sailing from Portsmouth, England, for Barbados on March 28, 1764. It was during this trip that William Harrison finally proved the measurement of longitude.

To be continued . . .

See *ARCHAEOLOGY*, Page 6

February: Time to celebrate Black History Month

February marks the beginning of Black History Month – an annual celebration that has existed since 1926. But what are the origins of Black History Month?

Much of the credit can go to Harvard scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who was determined to bring black history into the mainstream public arena. Woodson devoted his life to making “the world see the Negro as a participant rather than as a lay figure in history.” In 1926 Woodson organized

the first annual Negro History Week, which took place during the second week of February.

Woodson chose this date to coincide with the birth-days of

Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln – two men who had greatly impacted the black population.

Over time, Negro History Week evolved into the Black History Month that we know today – a four-week-long celebration of African-American History.

From the
**Office of Diversity
and Equal Opportunity**

Special Olympics at SSC seeks volunteers

More than 200 athletes are expected for this year’s Area III Special Olympics Track and Field Competitions scheduled for April 1 at John C. Stennis Space Center.

According to the 2006 chairperson, Becky Rotundo, at least 400 volunteers will be needed for this event – one volunteer is needed to escort every athlete during the day while the remainder will assist with the games.

A fundraiser kickoff luncheon will be held at the Cypress House pavilion on March 8. For more information, contact Rotundo at (228) 688-5328 or brotundo@nrl.navy.mil.

Hail & Farewell

NASA welcomes the following new hires at SSC:
Joseph Ladner, Judith Bruscano, Patricia Johnson, Lester Howard, Chantel Smith, Allan Calliham

NASA salutes its recent retirees from SSC:
Jim Bobinger, Dianne Bulen, Pat Mooney, Gerry Meeks, Dana Matherly, Richard Rider

ARCHAEOLOGY

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Equally important are new research methods that have resulted from the excavations. By layering digital versions of old documents over modern digital images, new types of geospatial imaging products were created.

“We basically piloted the process of matching historical documents – surveys, deeds and grants – to modern satellite and aerial imagery,” Giardino said. “By matching (or co-registering) images, you have a much better chance of digging in the right place, of going to a specific location and better interpreting what one finds there.”

The exhibit holds only part of the Gainesville artifacts of which SSC’s Environmental Office is the curator.

Giardino hopes the exhibit will convey several messages to StenniSphere visitors: that land ownership, in the historic perspective, is only temporary; that any piece of ground may have held a lively community at one time, and evidence of it may be right under our feet; that it’s important to conserve and properly record the past through proper methods; and that NASA technology can offer major benefits to archaeology and historical research.

While conducting archaeological activities at a spaceflight facility may seem odd, Giardino points to the importance of digging into SSC’s rich history.

“It’s appropriate for NASA to celebrate the heritage of Hancock County and the people who gave up their homes for this center to come to life,” he said. “It’s also important for instruction and education. By excavating and curating these items properly, we contribute to the understanding of this place and its roots.”

SSC, NASA raise funds for Combined Federal Campaign

For 2005, Stennis Space Center federal agencies raised a combined total of \$128,630.11 for the Combined Federal Campaign. The total NASA contribution was \$27,252.36.



The CFC is an annual fundraising drive conducted by federal employees in their places of work. Through the CFC, federal employees and military personnel across the nation each fall raise millions of dollars benefiting thousands of nonprofit charities.

SILVER SNOOPY

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■ **Kirk Foster** of Poplarville, Miss., is senior metrologist for Applied Geo Technologies, providing calibration lab services and accurate rocket engine test data to NASA's propulsion programs. AGT, a contractor to NASA, is owned by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

■ **Robert Ryan** of Diamondhead, Miss., is lead scientist for Science Systems and Applications Inc. and manages the systems engineering section for SSAI, which supports NASA's Applied Sciences Directorate.

■ **James Biles** of Pascagoula, Miss., is a facilities engineer for Jacobs Sverdrup in NASA's Test Operations Group. He works in the space center's cryogenic fuel and high-pressure industrial water facilities. Jacobs Sverdrup supports Stennis Space Center's rocket engine testing mission.

■ **Greg Conn** of Bay St. Louis, Miss., is a Jacobs Sverdrup engineering technician who certifies the operation of the test stands' valve systems at Stennis Space Center's A and B test complexes.

The Silver Snoopy award, initiated 35 years ago, recognizes individuals for professional dedication and outstanding efforts that greatly enhance the safety and success of human space flight missions. An astronaut always presents the Silver Snoopy because it is the astronauts' own award for outstanding performance, contributing to flight safety and mission success.

Who's who around NASA

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Director: David A. King

Stennis Space Center

StenniSphere visitor center reopens

StenniSphere, the visitor center at NASA's Stennis Space Center, is once again conducting tours of America's largest rocket engine test complex, operating Wednesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

StenniSphere reopened Jan. 18, almost five months after Hurricane Katrina damaged the basement of the building that houses the visitor center. Thanks to the visitor center staff's careful preparations before the storm, no artifacts or exhibits were harmed.

Two new exhibits have been added to the lobby of StenniSphere: One honors astronauts from Mississippi and Louisiana, and the other illustrates NASA technology used to examine the rich history of the towns that once stood on the test site.



Some of the first visitors to StenniSphere since Hurricane Katrina view a "Photo-op Astronaut" display at the visitor center.

[See related story, Page 5](#)

Astro Camp

Summer Astro Camp Mission: Moon, Mars and Beyond

Astro Camp crew members will embark on a weeklong adventure, learning about NASA's future in space exploration and the frontiers we plan to visit.

7- to 9-year olds:

June 5-9, June 12-16, June 19-23, June 26-30

10- to 12-year-olds:

July 10-14, July 17-21, July 24-28

Cost is \$150 per camper and includes supplies, lunch and snacks. For more information, call (228) 688-7623 or

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